

NATURE NOTES.

SCALE HOW,

AMBLESIDE.

January 16th.—We are among the hills once more, and most beautiful they are just now, covered with snow and dazzling in the bright sunshine, with the blue sky behind them.

We walked to Skelwith this afternoon. It is quite impossible to describe the grandeur of the falls. There is something so fascinating in watching the water dash over the rocks, and to see it foaming and spraying furiously below.

January 18th.—A quick thaw has set in, and only left a few lines of snow in the crevices of the highest hills. Loose vapoury clouds were hanging over the tops of Wansfell and Redscree when we started out for our walk. The German saying, "Hat der Berg einen Hut, bleibt das Wetter gut," did not hold good, for it soon began to rain.

January 20th.—The weather is exceedingly mild. Drops of rain, just like pearls, hang on the tips of the delicate red or pale green sporecase stems of the mosses. These look delightfully fresh and transparent on the tops of the walls. Beech and oak leaves still cling firmly to their respective trees, and add colour to the landscape, especially where the brown beech hedges alternate with the purplish hawthorn bushes. The hazel catkins are beginning to open and shed their pollen. They are earlier this year than last: the pistillate flower has also been found. The alders bear a great many catkins this year, which give a purple hue to the whole tree: but after much rain, when their blossom is washed off, they are quite dark crimson.

January 21st.—A lovely, bright day. We walked all round Rydal Water, crossing the Rothay before it enters the lake by the foot-bridge. We were very fortunate in seeing birds. A wood-pigeon flew out of the trees on Nab Scar Terrace and across towards Grasmere. We frightened a

NATURE NOTES.

27

pheasant out of some bushes down by the lake, which he evidently did not like, and flew off to a tree, making a great commotion. Then about eight or ten mallards suddenly arose from the reeds, and uttering loud cries, flew for a distance of about twenty yards down the lake, then all with one accord turned and flew back to the spot from where they had started, then they turned again and repeated the same figure above the water, quacking and flapping their wings vigorously all the time, until they finally settled on the water for a swim. The reflections in the lake were beautiful. We saw a jackdaw perched on an iron railing, and watched him for some time. He was very tame, and we were able to get very close to him. After having "taken us in" with his curious eyes, he hopped from the railing on to a low wall, where he walked up and down on his long legs in a very perky way, as if wishing to show off his fine, black, glossy plumage. He was a fat bird, but had a long tail. His beak is black and curved, and the back of the neck is grey. This evening the sun set gloriously behind the hills, leaving a deep orange sky, afterwards changing into crimson and purple, and a new moon rising in the south-east.

It was a frosty night, and the stars were beautifully clear. We saw the four moons of Jupiter through the telescope quite distinctly. We also looked at the double star in the tail of the Great Bear (Ursa Major).

January 22nd.—We went to Stock Ghyll Force. There was no great abundance of water, so the moss-covered rocks were shown off to a better advantage. The minims are at their best now, several are in spore. They resemble mosses, but may easily be distinguished from these by their more transparent appearance and the presence of a mid-rib in each leaflet. The niches in the rocks on the left bank of the Falls are one of their favourite growing places, especially where the water drips down under the little wooden bridges.

We noticed one of the differences between pines and firs. In the latter the leaves grow separately upon the branch, whereas in the pine they grow in twos or more. We could see exactly how much the twigs had grown this year from the fresh, tender look of the green and more still from the little cluster of tiny brown scales of last year's terminal bud

which marks the division, and from which the new shoot has sprung.

We found some lovely fungi growing on a fallen tree trunk (*polyporus versicolor*). They are semi-circular in shape, and spread out like a fan; their margins are very much crimped, and paler in colour than the rest. The under side is pale yellow, and often almost white; the upper surface is quite velvety, and varies in colour from brown, green, and blue to a rich purple.

January 23rd was a very foggy day. We went to the Nook, where we found a lot of primroses, but they had suffered a good deal from the weather, and looked very battered and half transparent. The best ones were to be found on the larger plants, lying hidden under the large leaves.

January 25th.—Another misty day prevented us from getting any clear view. We saw a coote swimming in and out among the reeds at the head of Windermere. Occasionally he would pop under the water and remain there for about half or three-quarters of a minute, then suddenly re-appear in another place.

There were three other birds on the water towards the off-side of the lake. We were unable to distinguish what they were until two of them left the water and flew over towards us, when we recognised them as common gulls. The one that remained behind was evidently, from the brownish colour of his plumage, a young gull.

January 27th.—We had a most delightful bird walk. Rydal is always a good place for seeing birds, and to-day we were not less fortunate than usual. Besides the more ordinary birds we saw and heard the dipper. He has a delicious song and such sweet notes. We heard him splendidly from the road; he was sitting on a projecting rock in the middle of the Rothay just after it has left Rydal Water.

When we reached the lake we noticed several dark specks moving about. Having brought the telescope out with us we were able to observe them. The light grey of their back and wings, the chestnut head and dark beak soon proved them to be pochards. Presently we saw a golden-eye, and were able to discern his colouring also by means of the

telescope. He has a black head and tail, some white on the wings, and a streak of white under the "golden" eye.

The pochards are most interesting to watch. They can swim at a wonderful rate. Suddenly they would stretch out their necks and put their heads under water, then with a jerk forward which made them seem to turn "head over heels," they would vanish altogether.

We saw four magpies flying among the tree tops on Nab Scar Terrace, and we heard the harsh screech of the jay. We have a jay here in the garden. I got a splendid view of him to-day on the terrace. He flew past me several times, the bright blue in his wings and the white streaks flashing in the sunshine.

January 28th.—We walked to Grasmere. The alders looked lovely all along the wall by the lake. They seem very fond of damp soil, and some are quite in the water. They still preserve the female catkins of last year, now quite brown and dried, and resembling a small fir cone.

January 30th.—We found the lesser celandine (*ranunculus ficaria*) in flower to-day at the foot of the low stone wall just beyond Brathay Bridge—one flower had already fallen.

The sycamore seeds are just beginning to germinate; the delicate pale green radicles tinged with pink have made their way through the decaying seed case, and are endeavouring to fasten themselves in the scanty soil between the stones of the walls where they have fallen.

K. L.

March, 1904.

	COMMON NAME.	LATIN NAME.	DATE.
1	Daisy	<i>Bellis Perennis</i>	I
2	Barren Strawberry .	<i>Potentilla Fragariastrum</i>	I
3	Groundsel	<i>Senecio Vulgaris</i>	I
4	Gorse	<i>Ulex Europaeus</i>	I
5	Hazel (p. & s.)	<i>Corylus Avellana</i>	I
6	Chickweed	<i>Cerastium Vulgatum</i>	7

	COMMON NAME.	LATIN NAME.	DATE.
7	Butterbur	Petasites Vulgaris.....	7
8	Alder (s.)	Alnus Glutinosa	10
9	Golden Saxifrage...	Chrysosplenium Oppositifolium	10
10	Celandine	Ranunculus Ficaria	10
11	Dog's Mercury (s.).	Mercurialis Perennis.....	10
12	Wych Elm	Ulmus Montana	21
13	Coltsfoot	Tussilago Farfara.....	19

This flower list has been contributed from Scotland for comparison—if anything it is in advance of any south country list which has yet come to hand.

STUDENTS' LETTER.

SCALE HOW,

AMBLESIDE,

MARCH, 1904.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

We are so delighted to hear that there is to be another Students' Conference here next year, and are all looking forward to it immensely. The Juniors are very happy with the thought that it will be during their time here. This has been rather a disturbed term for us, as there have been a great many colds and some influenza.

On February 1st Canon Gorton came and gave us a most delightful lecture on S. Francis d' Assisi. South Kensington lent us a lot of most beautiful slides of the Giotto frescoes in the Assisi Chapel, so that altogether we thoroughly enjoyed the lecture. Miss Mason invited the Art Students from the Technical Schools to come to it, and we gave them tea in the dining-room, while the other visitors were having tea in the drawing-room.

And now we have another treat in store for us. Mr.

Yates has promised to bring his lantern slides of Millet's pictures to shew us, and you know what that will mean—a delightful talk about that artist and art generally. This, however, will not be until next term. Miss Mason has had several of Millet's pictures (Perry Pictures) framed and hung up in the School, where they make such a difference to the room.

The Museum has had some most valuable additions to it in the shape of four lovely stuffed birds—a lapwing, barn owl, buzzard, and sparrow-hawk.

We are still thoroughly enjoying our Poetry Club, with its Saturday evening meetings, which have been in accordance with the programme, on Milton, Tennyson, and Herrick. So far we have only been able to have just those three meetings, as we did not have one on Keats, as we are having a Literary Evening on him, and we thought that our meeting would detract from that. We all feel very much disappointed that only six ex-students have sent in their names as members.

We had a most glorious Half-term Holiday. The weather could not have been more kind to us, for it was a beautiful day. We had two coaches and went to Little Langdales, where we had a twelve o'clock tea at Fell Foot Farm, after which we scattered in various directions. We drove by Colwith—the falls were lovely, so full of water—and came back by Dungeon Ghyll and Grasmere.

So far we have seen forty-three birds, some of which came here very early this year; but our Flower List is not very good.

We have had some very delightful literary evenings on Toussaint L'Ouverture, Thackeray, and Dickens, as well as a concert and two plays.

The Juniors gave us a varied entertainment early in the term, of which "Scaramouches" formed the principal part, which was very amusing and jolly.

Dr. Helen Webb has been down for a long week-end, which we all enjoyed. On the Sunday, instead of Meditations, Miss Webb read to us about Santa Theresa.

We have taken up the study of mosses with great enthu-

siasm this term. Mr. Thornley has sent us the most lovely collection of dried mosses, all put up in separate packets and named. In a letter about these he told us this, which we think it might interest you to know: In studying mosses from the specimens, it is advantageous to take a small portion of the vegetative part of the moss out, and put it for a minute into lukewarm water (in summer cold water will do), when the leaves will arrange themselves in a most natural way, the moss appearing just as it did in its natural situation. The moss must be well dried before it is returned to the packet. In preparing specimens, it is never good to press them much; they should be thoroughly and carefully dried, and only pressed enough to make them lie well in the packets.

We have had one day of grand tobogganing; that was after a fall of snow seven and a quarter inches in depth, followed by a good frost.

At present we have sixteen children in the School: three in Class IV., four in Class III., five in Class II., and four in Class I., a and b.

We have had a most unfortunate term with regard to Mrs. Firth's lectures and the cooking classes, as, owing to illness, we have only had (so far) three of the former and two of the latter. Dr. George has been ill, too, so Dr. Johnstone has been taking the hygiene lectures.

THE SENIOR STUDENTS.

NOTES FROM THE MINUTE BOOK OF THE POETRY CLUB.

- I. The first meeting of the New Year was held on January 23rd, at which a large gathering of old and new members was present.

In the absence of the Vice-President, the Secretary explained briefly the aims and objects of the Club to the new students, and welcomed them as members. Although the fortnight allotted to the study of Milton was passed, in accordance with a general request it was decided that the first meeting should be upon this poet, and Milton was therefore the order of the day.

A short discussion upon the poet's life was succeeded by the following readings:—

"Satan's Address to the Sun," and other extracts from "Paradise Lost," "Lycidas," "Lines on his blindness," &c.

- II. The meeting held on January 30th opened as usual with the reading of the minutes by the Secretary, after which a short paper on Tennyson's Life was read by one of the members. This was followed by a brief discussion. A great part of the evening was devoted to "Ænone" and to the "Palace of Art."

- III. The meeting on Herrick began with a life of the poet by one of the members. This was followed by various readings, among which we specially liked "Corilla going a-Maying" and his many "Whys" with regard to the flowers—"Why marigolds are yellow," &c.; "Oberon's Feast," "Discontent in Devon," &c. The reading was varied by the following songs: "Cherry Ripe" and "Bid me to live." The question was raised as to